

CHIDEOCK PARISH COUNCIL

Chideock@dorset-aptc.gov.uk

Chair: Cllr Vanessa Glenn, 6 Winniford Close, Chideock, DT6 6SA

01 297 480810

Clerk: Miss Sal Robinson, 60 North Allington, Bridport, DT6 5DY 01 308 426327

26 August 2019

Re: De-trunking a Strategic Highway.

I write to you on behalf of Chideock Parish Council hoping for some clarification on the process of de-trunking a Strategic Highway.

The Parish of Chideock, Dorset, sits astride the A35 trunk road and the local community is well aware of the associated problems including road safety; noise; traffic vibration; air pollution, congestion; village severance etc.

As a means of alleviating these problems the Village has expressed an interest in the possibility of the A35 being "de-trunked" either just locally to Chideock, or for a much longer stretch from Dorchester to Honiton. Will you, therefore, please provide us with a simple explanation of the process for de-trunking a Strategic Highway and your opinion upon the feasibility of any such proposal being implemented for the A35, either just locally to our village or for a longer stretch of the road.

I look forward to hearing from you in due course.

Yours sincerely

Sal Robinson (Miss), Chideock Parish Clerk

To: Matt Prosser, Dorset Council Chief Executive
John Hellgren, Dorset Council Executive Director of Place
Rt Hon Grant Shapps MP, Secretary of State for Transport
Jim O'Sullivan, Chief Executive of Highways England
Andy Roberts, Route Manager, South West Operations, Highways England

Cc: Sir Oliver Letwin MP
Simon Christopher, Dorset Councillor for Marshwood Vale Ward

Our Ref. 19183131

Miss. S. Robinson
Chideock Parish Clerk
60 North Allington
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11 September 2019

Dear Miss Robinson,

Re: De-trunking a Strategic Highway

Thank you for your letter dated 26 August 2019 on behalf of Chideock Parish Council, requesting clarification on the process to de-trunk a Strategic Highway and a specific question about de-trunking a section of highway in Dorset. I am replying to you as this issue falls within my area of responsibility.

In terms of the process to detrunk a section of the strategic highway, Highways England and the Department for Transport regularly review the geographic extent of the strategic road network and periodically invite proposals from interested parties, most recently through the Department's consultation^[1] on Highways England's Strategic Road Network Initial Report. When considering a proposal to designate or remove trunk road status, the Department and Highways England consider its fit with the intention for the strategic road network to:

- Link the main centres of population;
- Facilitate access to major ports, airports and rail terminals;
- Enable access to geographically peripheral regions; and
- Provide key cross-border routes to Scotland and Wales.

In addition, together with the relevant Local Highway Authority, evidence is collected about the effect and desirability of any change for both road users and local communities. Ultimately, the Secretary of State for Transport is responsible for making changes to the strategic road network and Section 10 of the Highways Act 1980 sets out the statutory process that must be followed.

[1] DfT (October 2018) Shaping the Future of England's Strategic Roads - https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/751849/summarising-responses-to-the-consultation-on-highways-englands-initial-report.pdf

In terms of your specific query, I understand the impact road traffic can have on our neighbours and communities in proximity to roads in the UK, and as an organisation we work hard to mitigate against these impacts through our management of the routes and in any enhancement schemes. Alongside this, we also need to balance the role that the strategic road network plays in providing accessibility across England and supporting long-distance travel and the economy.

The A35 runs along the south coast of England and together with the A30 and A31 provides a strategic link between Exeter, Poole and Bournemouth and also forms part of and connects into Highways England's strategic network via the M27 in the east and the M5 and A30 to the west of the route.

In either case, the proposed de-trunking suggestions would leave a gap in the strategic road network along the south coast. This would mean that the revised network would provide connectivity to Bournemouth and Poole from the east only, removing the strategic network link from and to the south-west.

It is also important to note that de-trunking in itself may not materially affect traffic volumes choosing to use the route, it would solely change ownership from Highways England to the local Highway Authority. As you're aware, Highways England is in the process of exploring the issues of concern to the local community in Chideock and has completed an initial phase of the A35 Chideock Community Severance and Pedestrian Safety Scheme. The results of the initial phase were presented to Chideock Parish Council on 15th May. As discussed at this meeting, subject to funding, Highways England anticipates the next phase of the study to commence in April 2020.

Thank you again for writing to Highways England about de-trunking.

Yours sincerely



Elliot Shaw
Strategy and Planning Executive Director
www.highwaysengland.co.uk